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AUTHOR	Coontz, Stephanie
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ABSTRACT

U.S. families are undergoing disconcerting changes. This book offers an explanation of the causes and consequences of today's family trends. The book demonstrates why a historically informed perspective on changing family roles and arrangements can be helpful in sorting through many family dilemmas and the conflicting messages given by political debates. The chapters are: (1) "Getting Past the Sound Bites: How History and Sociology Can Help Today's Families"; (2) "What We Really Miss about the 1950s"; (3) "Why Working Mothers are Here To Stay"; (4) "The Future of Marriage"; (5) "Putting Divorce in Perspective"; (6) "How Holding on to Tradition Sets Families Back"; (7) "Looking for Someone To Blame: Families and Economic Change"; (8) "How Ignoring Historical and Societal Change Puts Kids at Risk"; and (9) "Working with What We've Got: The Strengths and Vulnerabilities of Today's Families." The book concludes by noting: that although we can draw some lessons from the past about how to strengthen families, there are certain realities we must accept; that every kind of family has strengths that can be fostered and vulnerabilities that can be avoided; and that no family can raise children successfully today without the expansion of economic, cultural, and social support systems that modern parents so desperately need. (HTH)

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